

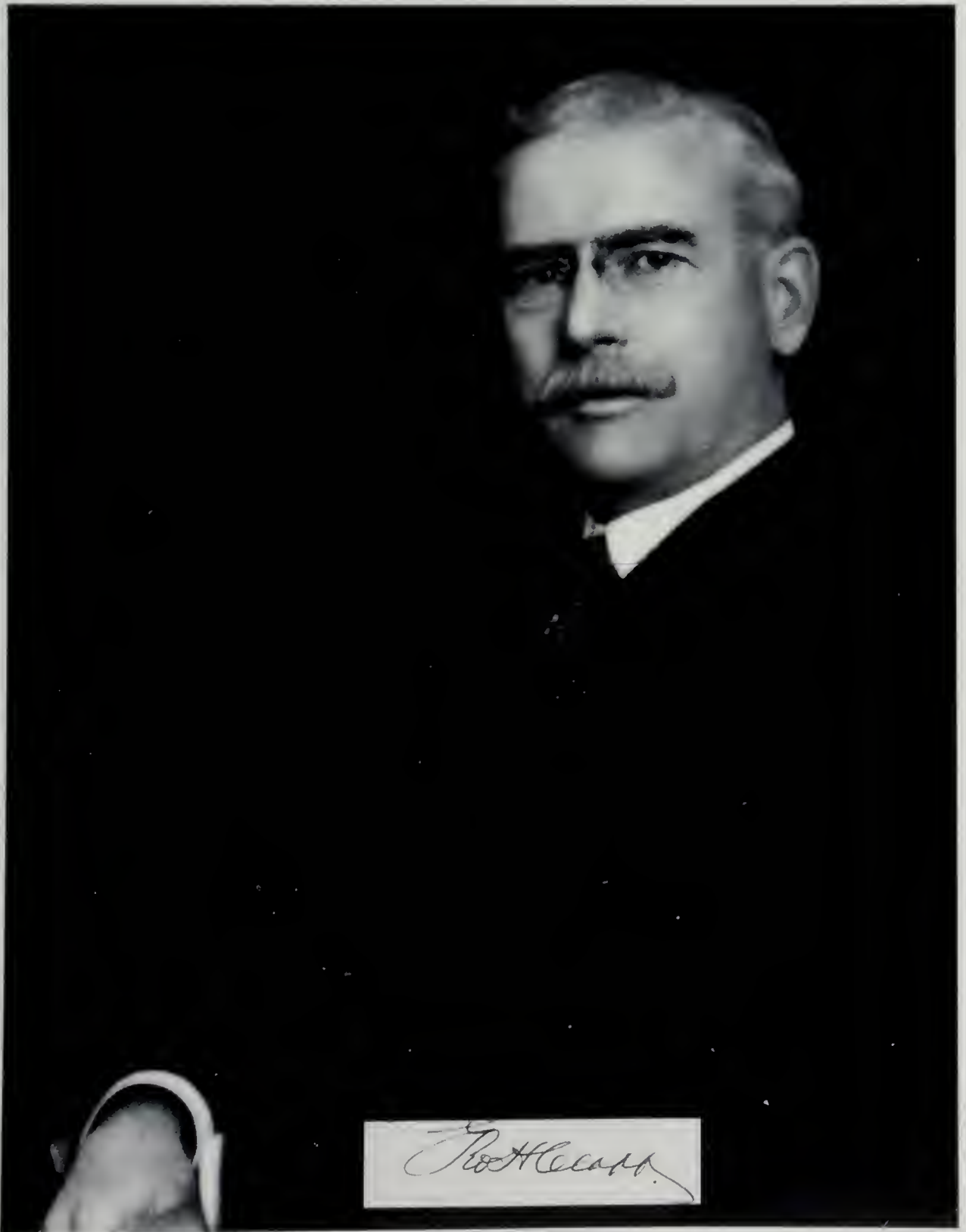
THE ASYLUM

Quarterly Journal of the
Numismatic Bibliomania Society

www.coinbooks.org

Volume XXI, No. 4

Fall 2003



*A precious — mouldering pleasure — 'tis —
To meet an Antique Book —
In just the Dress his Century wore —
A Privilege — I think —*

*His venerable Hand to take —
And warming in our own —
A passage back — or two — to make —
To Times when he — was young —*

*His quaint opinions — to inspect —
His thought to ascertain
On Themes concern our mutual mind —
The Literature of Man —*

*He traverses — familiar —
As One should come to Town —
And tell you all your Dreams — were true —
He lived — where Dreams were born —*

*His presence is Enchantment —
You beg him not to go —
Old Volumes shake their Vellum Heads
And tantalize — just so —*

— EMILY DICKINSON

The Asylum

Vol. XXI, No. 4 Consecutive Issue No. 84

Fall 2003

Table of Contents

Numismatic Literature of Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society Members before the Second World War by Wayne K. Homren	114
Town of Books by Russell A. Hibbs	126
George Kolbe and the California Wildfires by Wayne K. Homren <i>et al</i>	129
Mendacity Revisited by Myron Xenos	137

Front Cover: A portrait of George Clapp, author of *The United States Cents of the Years 1798-1799* (Sewickley, 1931) and (with Howard R. Newcomb) *The United States Cents of the Years 1795, 1796, 1797, 1800* (New York, 1947).

Numismatic Literature of Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society Members before the Second World War

by Wayne K. Homren

The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society (WPNS) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the study of coins, medals, tokens, paper money, and other objects of a numismatic nature from all parts of the world and all eras of history.

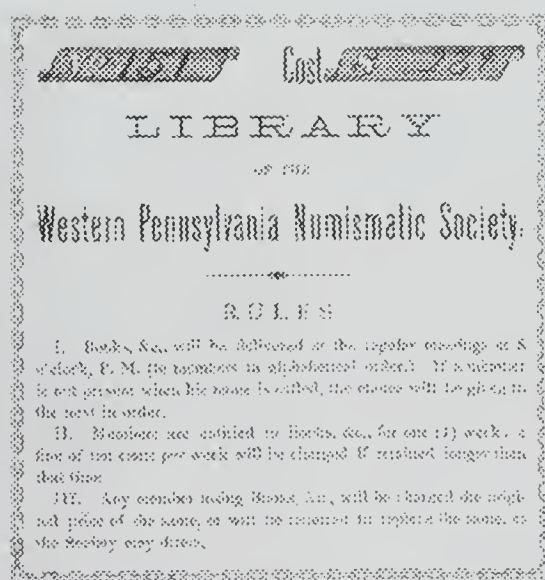
This work consists of the text and images of the items which I used for an exhibit at the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists Coin Show in May 2003. It is intended to showcase selected examples of numismatic literature by and about WPNS members from its founding through the beginning of the Second World War. I hope that a later article will demonstrate the significant literary contributions of the membership in the years since the great conflict.

Eight men met in Pittsburgh on June 14, 1878 to form the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society.¹ The founders were a diverse group, united by a common interest in the study of numismatics. They included three clerks, a salesman, a tobacconist/coin dealer, a painter, a newspaper carrier and a freshly-graduated college valedictorian and future millionaire.

The Society grew rapidly in its early years, and its members were very active. They quickly adopted a Constitution and set of Bylaws, and began forming a numismatic library and coin cabinet. To publicize the hobby of numismatics they set up a Society coin exhibit at the great Pittsburgh Exposition in 1878 and 1879. Souvenir medals were struck in each year to jointly commemorate the Exposition and the founding of WPNS.

The Society did not develop in isolation; its members subscribed to and contributed to various numismatic periodicals and auction sales in other cities. The Pittsburgh area was no numismatic backwater. There were at least four active coin dealers in Western Pennsylvania, and three of them were WPNS members. The first President of WPNS catalogued a total of 13 sales of numismatic material for auctions held in Pittsburgh.

¹ A more detailed account of the founding of WPNS may be found in W.K. Homren, "1878: The First Year of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society," *Proceedings of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society* 1 (1994), 3-10.



This October 6, 1882 catalogue of coin dealer John Haseltine's 61st sale once resided in the library of the WPNS. The sticker on the inside front cover shows the Society's rules for using library books and notes that this item was No. 151, purchased at a cost of 23 cents. Despite the cover, this particular sale was non-numismatic in nature — collectors of the day often studied American Indian artifacts in addition to coins.

The earliest known catalogue of a coin auction in Pittsburgh was the R.W. Shipman sale of January 28, 1879. Shipman was one of the founding members of WPNS. The 359 lot sale contained ancient Roman coins, U.S. coins and medals, and foreign coins including siege pieces. This is a very rare catalogue and is the only sale known to be by Shipman. He was later a charter member of the A.N.A. (member 79).

A total of 15 coin sales were cataloged by WPNS members between January 1879 and July 1881 — one by Shipman, one by Jonas Adler, and the remaining 13 by S.H. Morgan.

CATALOGUE
 OF A
 SMALL BUT FINE COLLECTION
 OF
 AMERICAN AND FOREIGN
 SILVER AND COPPER
 COINS AND MEDALS
 TO BE SOLD WITHOUT RESERVE AT AUCTION
 BY
 D. F. HENRY,
 AT No. 68 FIFTH AVENUE, PITTSBURGH,
 ON TUESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 28, 1879
 Commencing at Seven O'clock.
 Catalogued by R. W. SHIPMAN.

This will be faithfully executed by the Auctioneer and all Dealers in U.S.A.

PITTSBURGH, PA.
 J. H. F. Wigman, English and German Printer, 205 Liberty Street,
 1879.

- 25 238 1875, 20 cent pieces, Phila. and San Fr. mint 2 pieces
 45 239 1828, Quarter, good.
 35 240 1832, Quarter, good.
 25 241 1823, Dime, good.
 25 242 1826, Half-dollar, struck on polished planchet, sharp and
 bright as when dropped from the dies, desirable and
 very rare in this condition.

COLONIALS.

- 75 263 Fine tree shilling, good but pierced, 1652.
 15 264 Rosa Americana, Half-penny, electrotpe, fine.
 20 265 Wood Half-penny, nearly uncirculated, olive color, rare in
 this condition
 35 266 French colonial, poor.
 30 267 Voci Populi, fine but pierced.
 60 268 Auctori Connec, fine.
 10 269 Auctori Connec, good and poor. 2 pieces
 15 270 New York Nova Emboac, good.
 70 271 New York, Talbot Allum and Lee, 1794, good.
 40 272 Washington and Ind., 1783, U. S. Good.
 50 273 Washington and Indp., Unity States. Good.
 50 274 Vermont Auc. Var, good. 2 pieces
 80 275 Nova Constelatio, large planchet, good but pierced. Reverse
 Libertas et Justia, U. S. in script type.
 25 276 Nova Constelatio, small planchette, fair, U. S.
 70 277 Fugio or Franklin Cent, 1787, very good.
 25 278 Fugio or Franklin Cent, 1787, poor.
 30 279 Massachusetts Cent, very good, 1788.
 50 280 Virginia Cent, good, 1775.
 2 00 281 New Jersey, Nova Caesera, 1786; slanting beam to plow,
 mane of horse parted in middle, stands out both ways,
 sharply struck. Uncirculated, light olive color. A
 variety not described by Dickeson, very rare in this
 condition.
 35 282 Nova Caesera, 1787, very large planchet, straight beam, very
 good, scarce.
 70 283 Nova Caesera, 1786, very narrow shield, reverse epluckibus
 unum, crack in die under the shield. Rare.
 20 284 Nova Caesera, 1787, varieties good. 2 pieces
 20 285 North American Token, 1781. Very good.
 30 286 Ships Callings and commerce, ship flying American flag. Good
 20 287 Am I not a woman and a sister. Good.
 70 288 Webster and Van Buren currency. All good. 4 pieces
 5 289 Jackson currency, all different. Good. 5 pieces
 5 290 Adv. Tokens, old cent size, all different. Good. 7 pieces
 5 291 13 Tokens, brass, old cent size, all different. 5 pieces

Facing page: The title page from the earliest known coin auction in Pittsburgh.

Above: A sample page from the same catalogue with prices realized penciled in. Both items ex H.W. Bass sale (Kolbe No. 77, June 5, 1999, lot 462).

Jonas Adler has the dubious honor of being the first proposed WPNS member to be blackballed from the Society; he was denied membership on February 21, 1879. Apparently Mr. Adler had already developed a reputation for himself. His coin sale of April 1879 would be his first and last auction.

Ed Frossard wrote in the July 1879 issue of *Numisma*:

Dealers sending coins on approval to Mr. Jonas Adler, Pittsburgh, PA., will do well, if they wish to assure a safe delivery, to address the distinguished coin dealer in care of one of the Town Justices, or of the Sheriff of the County.

The September 1879 issue of *Mason's Coin Collectors' Herald* included an open letter to Adler:

You seem to be doing a wholesale coin business on credit; but in reply to your many solicitations we say patronize those who give 30 days and send us cash at half price you pay on credit. Perhaps the credit system pays you best.

The November 1884 issue of *Numisma* states:

Jonas Adler, Pittsburgh, PA., has been rustivating at Claremont Springs, at municipal expenses for swindling a Fifth Ave., cigar dealer in a transaction of old coins. A.A.A. No. 1, first-class preferred petty swindler. Coin collectors, beware of Jonas!

The copy opposite is from Kolbe sale of June 5, 1992, lot 1223.

This Catalogue can be had after the sale, neatly printed, at 25 cts. each.

COIN SALE,

APRIL 30, 1879.

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

JONAS ADLER,

No. 139 First Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

BY WHOM ORDERS FOR THIS SALE WILL BE
FAITHFULLY EXECUTED.

Thomas Ramsden became a member in 1879. Born September 14, 1833 in Yorkshire, England, Ramsden was apprenticed as a steam and gas fitter at the age of 15. He came to America with his parents in 1853, settling in Salem, Ohio. In 1859 he moved to Pittsburgh. He was listed in the 1860 Pittsburgh City directory as a gas fitter, living on Federal Street near Lacock in Allegheny City. Ramsden was President of the Society from 1883 through 1889. He died April 14, 1890.

On June 21 and 22, 1892 his collection was sold in Philadelphia by dealers S.H. & H. Chapman. The cataloguers state:

This collection is remarkable for the vast number of specimens of the regular coinage of the country — not merely for those easily obtainable but for rarities — many of the highest having example after example, as for instance the 1796 half dollars, two; 1797 six; 1793 cents, eighteen; 1799 four, including one of the best known, etc. The gold coins are also very choice.



A rare example of the first medal issued by WPNS to commemorate the Pittsburgh Exposition of 1878.

35
COLLECTION

OF THE LATE

THOMAS RAMSDEN,

CATALOGUED BY

S. H. & N. CHAPMAN,

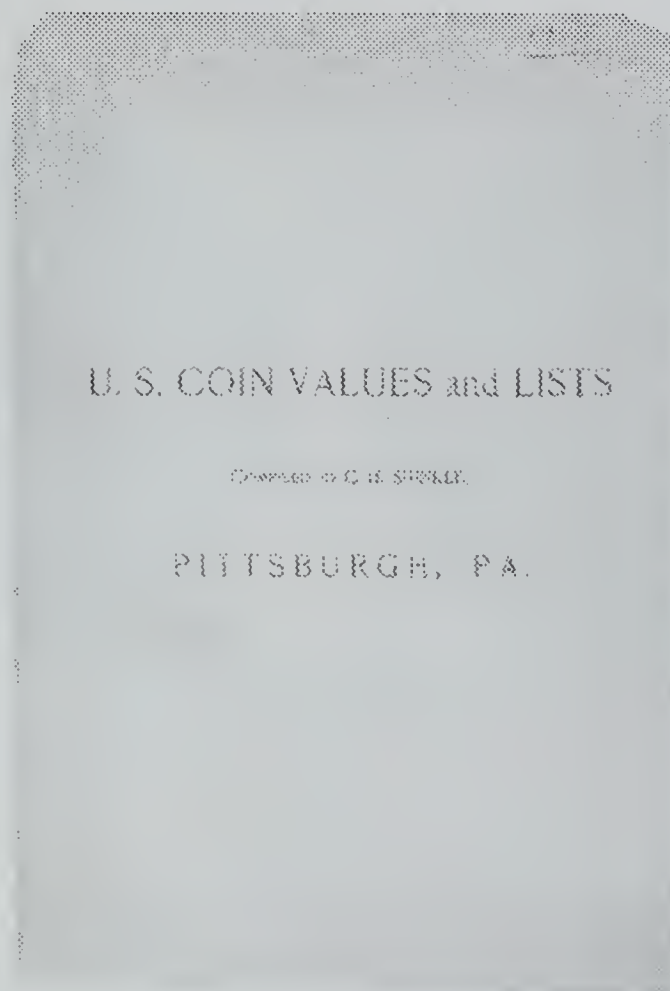
JUNE 21 and 22, 1892.

Charles H. Shinkle became a WPNS member in 1885. He was a bookkeeper at Wilcox, Shinkle & Miller, "founders and machinists, grist and saw mill machinery a specialty." The company was located at 39 Water Street in Pittsburgh. By 1905 Shinkle was president of "The Myers & Shinkle Co., Commercial Stationers, Printers & Binders," at 711 Liberty Street.

In that year he combined his business and hobby interests when he first published his booklet *U.S. Coin Values and Lists*. The card-covered volume was a forerunner of today's "Redbook," listing values for all regular issue U.S. coins in neat tabular format. The owner of the volume shown here apparently used it as a checklist for his own collection.

The "lists" referred to in the title included "Years in which the coinage was small," "Prices some of the rarities have brought in recent years," "The gold mint marks," and "List of private gold issues." The latter was illustrated by 38 photos "taken from specimens in Cabinet of John A. Beck, Esq., Pittsburgh, PA," produced by Philadelphia dealer Henry Chapman. The inside back cover held a list of the names and addresses of coin dealers from across the nation.

In 1913 Shinkle ran unopposed for the office of second Vice President of the A.N.A., serving under President Frank Duffield.



U. S. Coin Values and Lists—C. H. Shinkle—Pittsburgh, Pa.

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



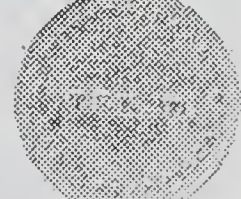
18



19



20



George H. Clapp was one of the founding members of WPNS at the age of 19. Clapp was probably the youngest of the eight founders, having just graduated from college in 1877. He had attended the Western University of Pennsylvania, (later renamed the University of Pittsburgh). His scholarship and talents were well recognized at the time: Clapp graduated first in his class and delivered the commencement address. An enterprising lad, he had made an arrangement with the keeper of a nearby toll bridge to search his till for strange coins and old coppers.

He developed an early interest in science. In 1888 he met Charles Martin Hall, a young inventor who had recently discovered an electrolytic process for reducing aluminum. Previous methods of extracting aluminum from ore were very expensive, and he was quick to realize the tremendous potential of Hall's process. With friends, they formed the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, which later became the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA).

Clapp served the corporation for many years as its Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, and member of the Board of Directors. Throughout his distinguished career, Clapp never lost interest in numismatics. In 1931 he published *The United States Cents of the Years 1798-1799*. Only 126 copies were printed, along with 9 in leather. The photographic plates are exquisite, and this rare volume is highly prized by collectors today.

In 1947 he and Howard R. Newcomb published a companion volume, *The United States Cents of the Years 1795, 1796, 1797, 1800*. This work had four equally exquisite photographic plates.

*To Caroline W. Offerman
whose careful writing and
editing greatly helped the
preparation of this book.*

Geo. H. Clapp

Clapp's dedication to his secretary for her aid in the preparation of his book. This copy ex the Clapp family.

THE UNITED STATES CENTS
OF THE YEARS 1798 - 1799



GEORGE H. CLAPP

The front cover of Clapp's masterpiece.

Town of Books

by Russell A. Hibbs

What can turn an otherwise normal, more-or-less intelligent, calm bibliophile into a crazy, irrational, slobbering bibliomaniac? Books, of course. And for me, particularly, numismatic books. What has been your fantasy in collecting such books? How about visiting a new bookstore in a small town that you had driven through often but never noticed before — and finding that they have long shelves stuffed with dozens of older (plated) white catalogues from the 19th century? Or how about finding a tiny town in western Tennessee with many antique stores, but whose book shelves had obviously never been searched for numismatic books? Salivating yet?

I recently had an experience very close to the above scenarios while I was visiting Great Britain this past August. Has anyone heard of Hay-on-Wye, Wales — just across the border from England? I had heard of this fabulous “Town of Books” but had never been there in the past. Actually, it was founded in 1961 by a certain Richard Booth, self-proclaimed King of Hay and owner of the local Hay Castle, where he opened his first second-hand bookstore, and encouraged others to do likewise.

This time I was determined to visit this town and while driving northwards from the beautiful southwest of England, we turned off the M-1 motorway on our way to the Midlands. It proved more difficult to find than I thought it would, but after following maps and making several unscheduled mini-tours, we finally arrived in Hay-on-Wye, approximately ten miles into Wales, and after seeing only two small signs telling us we were getting close.

It is a relatively small town of approximately 1,000 people situated on the River Wye (Afon Gwy). It is a fairly typical Welsh village of ancient, narrow streets, old churches, and the best part — 37 bookstores plus one humongous book mall, consisting of at least 20 separate small bookstores. Many of the stores were extremely specialized — in children’s literature, murder mysteries, poetry, erotica and even books on boxing — but most were run-of-the-mill, generalized, huge accumulations of pre-owned, second-hand books (more than a million). They were nearly all well catalogued according to the individual owner’s whims — be sure to look at the posted lists — and thus are relatively easy to navigate. My first question to a store employee was “Do you have any numismatic books?” and his obviously blank expression warned me he was summer-only help with a limited knowledge of the finer elements of books. However, it eventually became clear that numismatic books would be listed under “collectibles,” or “hobbies,” or even “stamps,” but never under “coins” or “numismatics.”

Since my wife was tired by this time — she was more than happy to rest at our cute little bed and breakfast, where we had an entire

attic area to ourselves, while I devoted an entire day to examining every single bookstore in town — yes, even the boxing one! I was interested in books other than numismatic ones (I found a first British edition of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and a 150-year-old, leather-bound copy of Bunyon's *Pilgrim's Progress*) but was able to visit and search diligently through all the stores in a wonderful 4 or 5 hour period.

Prices were generally reasonable and in some cases a real bargain (Head's *Coins of the Ancients*, second edition, was only £5 [around US \$8.75] but in deplorable condition — a reading copy). However, the general quality of all books varied greatly and could have been better. One bookstore was on the grounds of the local church on metal bookshelves and literally open to the elements.

I finally got into a routine with each bookshop. First, I tried to find the numismatic books without asking, usually under "collectibles," "stamps," or "hobbies," and often in the general area of these, but not necessarily on the correct shelf. One store had a nice selection right across the aisle from collectibles which I would have missed had I had searched only in collectibles. Secondly, I would take a general swing around the store looking under history, economics, sports, banks, etc., and finally ask the proprietor if they had any "books on coins," or older, out-of-print, rare books on coins. In one store this brought forth a copy of Charles Jenkinson's *A Treatise on Coins of the Realm in a Letter to the King* (London, 1805) with pages in extremely fine condition but in a deplorable (original?) cardboard binding. This item had a price tag of £125 (around US \$210). I had to pass at this cost and was later informed by George Kolbe that it was not a very scarce book and he had recently sold a leather-bound copy for \$125.

So what numismatically related works were available in these 38 bookstores? First of all, I had the pure joy of looking through literally thousands of books and finding 20 or so devoted only to coins. I bought most of them because they were either printed in England, titles I did not have, editions I lacked, or occasionally an extra copy of a classic.

The following are examples of titles I added to my collection:

John M. Erskine, *Our Bank: The Story of the Commercial Bank of Scotland 1810-1941* (London, 1934) with the signature of the General Manager on the frontispiece.

John Shirley-Fox, *The Pleasures of English Coin Collecting* (Medstead, 1934).

J.G. Milne, *Greek and Roman Coins and the Study of History* (London, 1939).

Margaret Amstell, *Early Period of Coin Collecting* (London, 1969).

W. Carew Hazlitt, *The Coin Collector* (London, 1896).

Paul Johnson, *Gold Fields: A Centenary Portrait* (London, 1987).

In summary, I spent a glorious day searching various bookstores in a fascinating small Welsh village coming up with 20 or so volumes of numismatic literature at fair to bargain prices. I would not have missed the adventure for anything; it was hobby time well spent! I would strongly advise anyone who is traveling to stop and smell the bookstores in your area, especially in small towns. We even have one in Hason, Kentucky — population 25 — that has thousands of used books in no particular order. You never know what you will find.

Get on Board with *The E-Sylum*
**the weekly e-mail newsletter of the
Numismatic Bibliomania Society**

Hundreds of bibliophiles around the U.S. and the world subscribe to this free publication, containing news and information about NBS and numismatic literature in general.

To subscribe, write to Wayne Homren at
whomren@coinlibrary.com
For more information, see the NBS web site at
<http://www.coinbooks.org/>

George Kolbe and the California Wildfires

By Wayne Homren *et al.*

Editor's Note: In late October 2003 a series of wildfires swept across areas of southern California. Thousands of buildings were destroyed and many families lost their homes and nearly everything they owned. Among the houses threatened during this disaster was that of long-time numismatic literature dealer and NBS founder George Frederick Kolbe. During the crisis Wayne Homren published a number of Special Editions of the weekly newsletter The E-Sylum keeping people aware of events. Below is the complete texts of Wayne's e-mails regarding the Kolbes.

October 28, 2003:

Kolbes Evacuated From Crestline Fire Zone

Quite a number of our E-Sylum subscribers have inquired about numismatic bookseller George Frederick Kolbe and his wife Linda, who live in Crestline, California, the area where massive forest fires are underway.

At 7:00 pm EST Stephen Pradier wrote: "I have been trying to reach George Kolbe and just found out that he and Linda have been evacuated. George's voice mailbox is full so you cannot leave a message. I sent him an email and will try to reach him if I can. If you hear anything, please let me know."

I tried calling George myself this afternoon, and know others tried the same multiple times. I'm sending this special issue of The E-Sylum to let everyone know that the Kolbes are believed to be safe. Since George was hard at work cataloguing the John J. Ford numismatic library, the next question on most minds is the fate of the Kolbe home. Let's hope fate intervenes and spares this library for the ages.

The following comes from an article published earlier today in The Mountain News, a local paper serving Lake Arrowhead and surrounding communities.

It is now mandatory for all mountain residents to evacuate — from the top of the mountain all the way to Yucaipa.

As of 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday some 26,000 plus acres have burned across the mountain. The San Bernardino Mountains portion of 'The Old Fire' fire is at 5 percent containment. The fire is now currently being held at rim of the world high school and air tanker water and retardant drops are progressing at this time. To date 24 homes in Crestline have burned in the Great View and Skyland areas, and officials say 24,000 homes are considered 'threatened', with 500 commercial properties also under 'threat'.

Over the Weekend...

The 7-Eleven store at Lake Gregory Drive and Lake Drive in Crestline was the scene of pandemonium on Saturday night and Sunday morning as residents from all over the mountains heard that the store was the only place to pump gasoline in the entire area from Running Springs to Crestline.

Owner Tony Tarlochan kept the business up and fully operating with the use of large generators and back-up generators. He said that on Saturday night there were 30 cars in each of the two gas lines at the station. Violent fistfights broke out among some of the people in line and Tarlochan and others had to intervene. "They were almost going to kill each other," Tarlochan said. By 8 a.m. on Sunday morning there were 200 people outside of the 7-Eleven.

From another report from the Long Beach Press-Telegram:

At least 1,137 homes had been destroyed and 15 people killed as of Tuesday by five separate blazes scattered around Southern California. The flames dotted an area that extended, on a straight line, more than 100 miles, from the Mexican border north to the suburbs of Los Angeles.

A handful of other fires that hadn't hit any homes also consumed tens of thousands of acres of brush and forest lands, bringing the total burned to more than 500,000 acres or about 800 square miles, roughly three-quarters the total area of Rhode Island.

"It's a worst-case scenario. You couldn't have written anything worse than this. You can dream up horror movies, and they wouldn't be this bad," said Gene Zimmerman, supervisor of the San Bernardino National Forest, the area in which two of the most destructive fires began last week.

October 29, 2003:

Kolbe Update

Mike Hodder writes: "George and Linda Kolbe are safe. They're staying in San Bernardino with George's sister. He can see Crestline from a window in her house. He hasn't been allowed back up the mountain so he doesn't know the status of his home. He managed to remove some materials from the house before evacuation. He hopes to return to Crestline soon and will report to all who are concerned. He thanks everyone who's asked after him and is worried. He says he and his family are safe, which is the most important thing at a time like this. The Ford Family and all his friends at the ANS have wished him only the best of luck and I've passed this on to him."

Fred Lake writes: "Many thanks for keeping us posted on efforts to contact George Kolbe. I, too, tried to reach George without success.

All of us in the numismatic community are hoping for the best in this tragic situation. The amount of irreplaceable literature in George's inventory is staggering and we can only pray that the fires will spare the Kolbe's home and all of its contents.

Please keep all of us informed of any new developments."

Stephen Pradier adds: "Foxnews.com has a listing of all of the fires in California on its website. The one where George is located is referred to as the Old Fire. According to their information there have been four deaths and 500 homes destroyed in that area. The Old Fire encompasses Lake Arrow Head and Crestline."

A story posted three hours ago on The Santa Paula Times web site states: 'In San Bernardino County, the so-called Old Fire destroyed more than 400 homes before jumping the highway and heading into the heavily forested area of Crestline, where 25 more homes were lost.'

There are some signs of hope — yesterday The Los Angeles Times reported: 'Though firefighters haven't been able to prevent fires from overrunning hilltops and hundreds of homes, they have had some victories along the way. A community landmark, the Cliffhanger Restaurant in Crestline, was saved Sunday when firefighters covered it with protective gel made out of the same absorbent material used in baby diapers. The blaze surrounded the building but moved past without damaging it, much to the amazement and satisfaction of weary firefighters.'

Bill Gibbs, Dick Doty, Col. Bill Murray, George Vanca and others have written of their concern for the Kolbes and efforts to contact them earlier. I'll keep The E-Sylum readers posted if we learn anything new before our normal Sunday issue.

October 30, 2003:

Kolbe Update: Good News!!

There has been an outpouring of concern for the Kolbes, and I'm just glad we have the medium of The E-Sylum to communicate quickly with the bibliophile community.

Marvin Lessen writes: "I spoke to George's nephew yesterday, and then George, himself, in the afternoon (Wednesday). All are safe; they evacuated Saturday afternoon. The house was still standing in the morning (contact from a local restaurant owner who was staying open to serve firemen). No status on his daughter's house in Crestline or son's in Arrowhead. No electricity; his phone messages are not from his answering machine but are handled by AT&T.

The bad news is that fire was returning to the Crestline area yesterday by the backside, so we know nothing further, and I have nothing new as of Thursday morning. (Someone had forwarded your E-Sylum notice to me.)"

From George's web site Thursday morning

10/30/03 8:30 AM PST

Office, house and property unscathed at 8:30 AM. Very light rain falling.

Mike Hodder writes: "George Kolbe called this morning to say his house and contents are okay. I'm sure that's a big relief to us all. He drove up the mountain to Crestline with his son, who has a press pass. The area is a mess but his street seems okay. The fire dept. had set up its command post near his home and there were several engines in his street. The area was very damp due to "tree rain", which is a good thing. George thinks he'll be back in his home within 24 hours, as soon as the police establish anti-looting patrols.

I'm sure we'll all hear more from George over the next week. George wants to say thanks to all who've called to express their concern. I doubt George will lack for things to say in his intro to the first Ford sale. Maybe it should be titled The Miracle Sale."

Earlier, Barry Tayman and several others wrote to express their concern. Perhaps our collective prayers have been answered.

David Fanning wrote: "Thanks so much for the update. It's a big relief to know that the Kolbes are safe. Let's hope the house is spared as well."

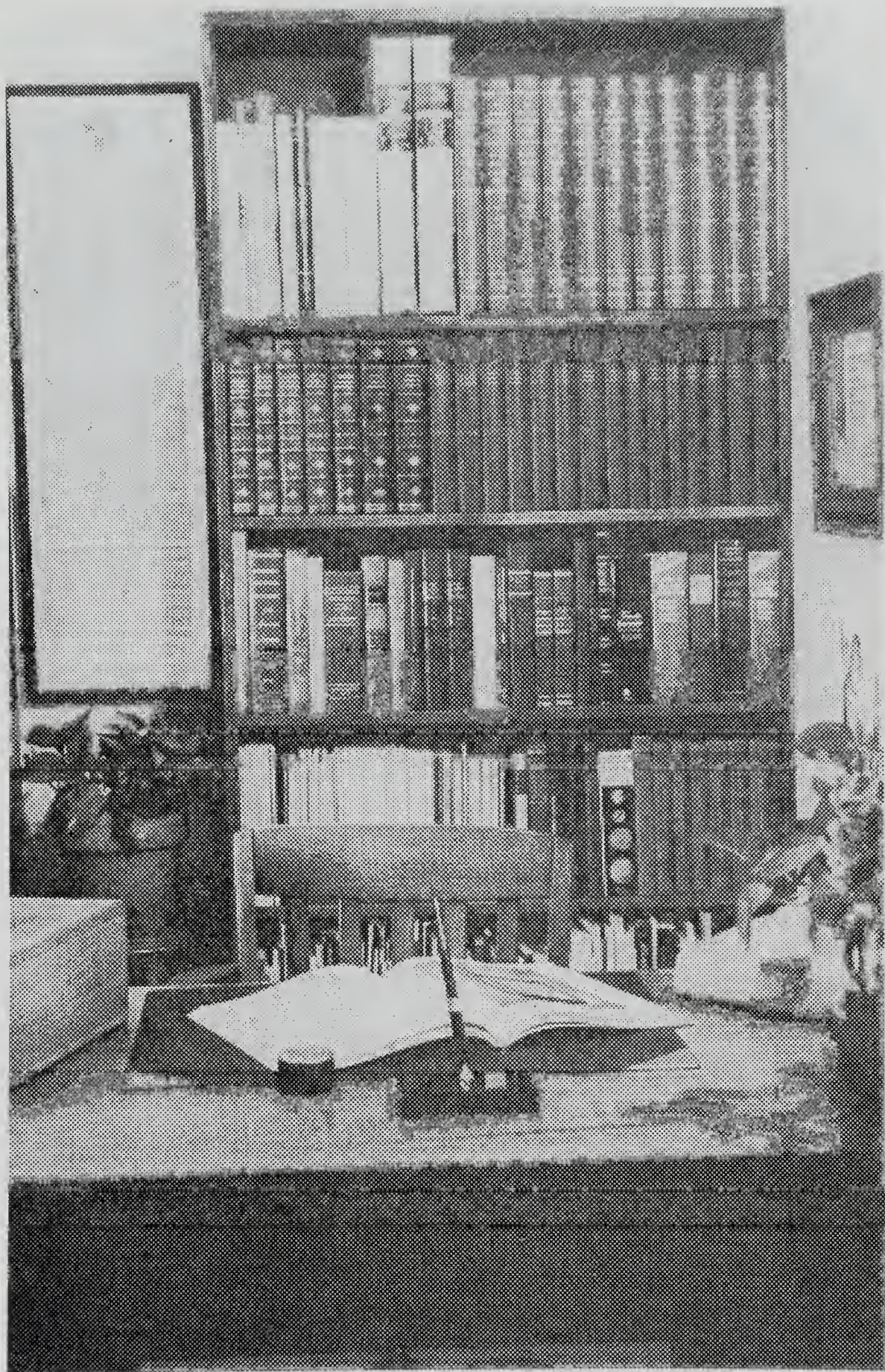
Terry Stahurski wrote: "Thanks for keeping the Bibliomania fraternity updated on this situation. My thoughts and prayers are with the Kolbes."

Bill Stone wrote: "Thanks for the updates on Mr. Kolbe and family. Hope they were one of the lucky ones who did not lose everything."

Bill Spengler wrote: "I, too, have been terribly worried about George and his family and their bibliographic treasures in Crestline, where I have visited twice, including an auction session.

So, many thanks to you and others for keeping us informed on the Kolbes' situation. It is a relief to know that they are safe and well in San Berdoo. And please, when you are able to communicate with George, add me to those deeply concerned and prayerful that the tragic fire spares the Kolbe home. Thanks."

I visited Kolbe Manor myself on a couple of occasions, but not for an auction. While in the area one time I met John Bergman and we drove up the mountain for a visit with George. It was a very pleasant afternoon, including a lovely lunch Linda cooked for us all. The last time was in 1997 when Dee and I were returning from our honeymoon in Hawaii. We were spending a few days with friends in Orange County, and one day we visited the Kolbes. After stopping at the house to say hello we spent much of the afternoon on our own



George Kolbe's office as it appeared in his 11th sale catalogue (June 11/12, 1982).

as tourists at Lake Arrowhead. Later, we went out to dinner at a local restaurant with George and Linda. It was a marvelous time. It is sad now to think of how much property has been lost in the area. Thank heaven for what has been saved.

November 2, 2003:

Kolbe Update: Still No Power, But Property Safe

Bill Rosenblum writes: "We're optimistic that things seem to be looking better for George and his family and his books.

Wednesday we had wildfires raging in Colorado but the temperatures dropped 50 plus degrees in 12 hours, plus light winds and freezing rain made us all very happy. Had dinner last night with Jesse Patrick and both he and I send our best to George."

Bill McDonald writes: "Please convey to George the concerns of those of us at the Classical and Medieval Numismatic Society for him and his family — in fact on behalf of all numismatists in Canada as we, in a number of areas in Canada have gone through what George and his family are experiencing, although not on such a large scale as the tragic events now unfolding in California. Also we welcome the recent news that the situation may be getting under control and hope and pray that all danger may soon be over."

Barry Tayman writes: "Thanks for the update and the continued good news. We are all grateful for your assistance in keeping us informed. Hopefully, George's house and contents will continue to be spared."

Ray Williams writes: "Thanks Wayne for keeping us informed as to the Kolbe's being okay and that their home is ok so far. I'll share this info with the colonial eggroups."

This afternoon the following note appeared on George's web site:

Due to fire threat in Crestline: 11/2/03 1:00 PM PST
Evacuation for most of Crestline has been lifted George has returned home. Office, house and property fine. No power. Phone problematical. No FAX or Internet.

We can all breathe a sigh of relief now. With luck George will be back online by next week and will provide us with a first-person update.

So What Would You Take With You?

David Gladfelter writes: "Thanks for this info. I am reminded of the question asked by the character in H. G. Wells's *Time Machine*, if you could choose only one book from your library to take with you, which one would it be? I have no idea how to answer that question and I would hate to be in a situation where I would have to, but

that's what has happened to 2,600 families in the paths of the California wildfires, thankfully not including George and Linda."

[So, dear readers, how would you answer the question? If you could save just one item from your numismatic library, what would it be, and why? – Editor]

E. Tomlinson Fort writes: "It has been wonderful to see all the outpouring of good wishes for George Kolbe and his family during these fire disasters in California.

While the Kolbe's remain in our prayers let us not forget the thousands who have lost homes and possessions during this tragedy. Also, stop and remember the firemen who are daily risking their lives battling these fires. On National Public Radio yesterday they interviewed a fireman who had been on the front line 36 hours without break for either food or sleep. During the interview he was finally getting a chance to have some breakfast which would be followed by a few hours sleep. These men and women are the true heroes of this crisis and they deserve thanks and generosity of the entire country."

November 9, 2003:

Kolbe Update

Dave Bowers writes: "The George Kolbe situation reminds me once again how caring and sharing numismatists can be. We are all delighted that for George the scenario ended safely, and are sad that for others it did not. I've sent a few e-mails to him, and now I know that they won't be delivered until his service is restored. I can just see him looking at his screen and finding 1,001 messages, none of them about bidding on books!"

George Kolbe writes: "Dear Wayne, When Alan Meghrig told me that four special issues of The E-Sylum had largely been devoted to providing updates on the wildfire affecting Crestline, I irreverently replied: 'Only four?' In truth, Linda and I were entirely taken by surprise over the outpouring of concern and good wishes expressed in The E-Sylum issues, voice mail messages, and emails received from all over the world. We did not know we had so many caring friends. Thank you all.

On Saturday morning, October 25th, I received a call from a neighbor who said that a fire had just started in Old Waterman Canyon, but a few miles away as the proverbial crow flies. I quickly walked across the street and did see a small fire at the base of the canyon.

The road through Waterman Canyon was established in the early 1850s by Mormons, who, under the direction of Brigham Young, established a large settlement in San Bernardino, today the large city directly below Crestline. Soon, sawmills were established in Crestline (so renamed after being inelegantly termed 'Fly Camp' dur-

ing 1870s mining days) to provide lumber for the burgeoning Mormon community.

Returning to recent events, within an hour or less the fire was raging and we started packing boxes and filling the car. Later in the day, my son George came by after packing his belongings and we packed more boxes and loaded them in his truck. Early that evening we visited George and his wife Susy's home, a mile away, and discovered a raging 'crown' fire a thousand feet away. Crown fires are dreaded by firefighters because they are largely incapable of containment. Trees well over a hundred feet high were enveloped in flame on the top of the mountain. Within a minute or two, police arrived and ordered mandatory evacuation.

On the way back home, several fire trucks passed to fight the fire [later we learned that it had been just set and was not part of the main fire] and, across the valley from us, we could see a whole convoy of police cars coming up the main road to Crestline. By the time we arrived home, vehicles were driving by with bullhorns blaring mandatory evacuation orders. My daughter Jennifer and son-in-law Tim, who live a mile away in the other direction, had arrived in the interim, and the six of us, along with three dogs, and a cat, got in our four vehicles and traveled the back way out of Crestline, then back to San Bernardino, where we met in a restaurant parking lot. Lodging was already unavailable locally and we traveled to the nearby city of Riverside to spend the night in a rundown hotel.

The following day, Tim's parents Claude and Margaret (who live in an area of San Bernardino evacuated early the previous day), graciously invited us to stay with them and, for the next few days, we watched the surrounding mountains burn and fruitlessly sought specific information about what was happening in Crestline. Within a half mile or so of our hosts' home, the first day of the fire had completely destroyed several hundred homes. Sometimes a house and surrounding yard would be entirely intact, while around it husks of cars and chimneys were the only things standing. Humbling, to say the least. I won't go on. From here, major events are chronicled in *The E-Sylum*.

The Southern California wildfires have worked their way and we are grateful that we are all well and that our office, home and the homes of our children are still intact. Our deepest thanks are extended to all who expressed their concern during this difficult period.

Wayne, we owe a special thanks to you!

Best,

George, Linda, and family

Mendacity Revisited

by Myron Xenos

You really had to be there. No amount of explaining is adequate to describe the rush that was felt by the bibliomaniacs that date in late March 1992. Those of us upon whom Fate smiled that day were sure that the next hoard of numismatic literature was about to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of time.

It went something like this: Martin Nathaniel Daycius Galleries announced a public auction of books and catalogues on coins and sundry items to be held on Wednesday, the first of April at 1204 Magnolia in Fort Worth, Texas. From here, I must quote verbatim the body of the flyer (Put this in the context of an auction catalogue you may just have received, imploring you to come and bid):

Many 100's of lots, recently discovered. From a long deceased dealer. (i.e. 35 years) Old coin books. Many old catalogs in beautiful leathers, though a number marked up with prices and various names. Nice photos in a number. Lots of old records and invoices also, Several box lots of old coin envelopes, letters and so on. Large pile of old coin sales, a few going back to the 1820's.

So, the plot thickens in a crudely written paragraph containing tidbits that cause collectors to salivate. The announcement is signed M. N. Daycius, auctioneer, Carrollton, Texas.

This, naturally, is where we all went deaf, dumb and blind, mostly dumb, with our collective judgment fogged up by salacious thoughts of acquisition. It is necessary, at this juncture, to keep in mind that this era was truly golden for numismatic literature. Still alive were Armand Champa, John Bergman, Jack Collins, Frank Katen, Ken Lowe, and other such as Harry Bass, and wallets were open wide for occasions such as this.

Just how blinded we were by what I refer to as our "desire to acquire" become evident, but only as an afterview. Each of us sat in his own chair at his own residence and thought — "Wow, this is old man Mehl's stuff, Fort Worth, prices, names, and nice photos, coin sales going back to the 1820's." My file contains an Express Mail Next Day Service receipt from Armand Champa sending cash to 1204 Magnolia in Fort Worth for next day air reply to both his Louisville, Kentucky, and Las Vegas locations. Rumor had it that Champa had round trip airplane tickets purchased for a fast flight down south. I'm confident that he was not the only bibliophile that had dreams of sugarplums dancing in his head.

Now, some reality if you please. After eleven years of looking back and saying things like — "Where the heck was my brain?"

The auction was to be held on April 1st – April Fool's Day. 1204 Magnolia was the address of Mehl's business, the famous "Mehl Building." It is now an abandoned structure. Besides, one cannot

find Daycious' street address on any of the material he sent out. His arrogance was such that he automatically assumed that the Mehl Building to get his post properly delivered.

The auctioneer was from Carrollton, Texas. Where is that? Not on any of my maps! Who was the auctioneer anyway? M.N. Daycius. Hmmm. Let me see, Mendacious. Aha. Why, that means dishonest, false, untrue.

And it came to pass that we were all taken for a very thrilling but anticlimactic voyage. So, what is the point of regurgitating this biblioprunk? After more than a decade of good-hearted accusations, suppositions and inquisitions, it is now time for this cold case to be solved, not that the odds are tilted in our favor. The perpetrator of this scam has had eleven years to fess up to his well-planned prank, and has been applauded by many for novel and intellectually demented gag. Obviously, this person has a poker face and uncanny ability to keep a secret.

Now, here is where we need to play American Numismatics Most Wanted. Give this some serious thought, come up with a list of one to five people, in the most likely order that they may have committed the dirty deed. Be sure to give the reason(s) behind your choice(s). Remember, this act took much intelligent thought, a sense of humor and contacts such as a friend at the post office who could cancel the flyers without leaving a trace of their origin. Send these names to me at The Money Tree, 1260 Smith Court, Rocky River, OH 44116; fax: 440-333-4463; email: mdxenos@comcast.net and they will be published in a future issue of The Asylum. We will hunt down the scoundrel and give him a trophy. Be careful out there.

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY

OFFICERS

President
Pete Smith
2424 4th Street NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Vice-President
John W. Adams
60 State St., 12th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
jadams@ahh.com

Secretary/Treasurer
W. David Perkins
PO Box 212
Mequon, WI 53092
wdperki@attglobal.net

Members of the Board

Phil Carrigan 1944 Ash Street, Waukegan, IL 60037 philrph1892@cs.com
John Kraljevich, PO Box 5706, Annapolis, MD 21403 jkral2003@yahoo.com
Karl Moulton, Box 1073, Congress, AZ 85332 numiscats@aol.com
Joel Orosz, 4300 Old Field Trail, Kalamazoo, MI 49008 joelorosz@aol.com
P. Scott Rubin, PO Box 6885, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648 numislit@msn.com
David Sklow, PO Box 50231, Colorado Springs, CO 80949 sdsklow@aol.com

The Asylum Editor:
E. Tomlinson Fort
PO Box 77131
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
etfort@comcast.net

The Asylum Editor-in-Chief:
David Fanning
PO Box 6153
Columbus, OH 43206
fanning32@earthlink.net

Advertising Rates

Full Page	\$60
Inside Front, Inside or Outside Back Cover	\$65
Half Page	\$35

Discounts for multiple issue advertisers are available.

For rates, please contact editor.

The Asylum is published quarterly. Manuscripts sent to the editor should be accompanied, if possible, by a CD. Submissions may also be emailed.

Authors, please put your name(s) on all submitted material.

All accepted manuscripts become the property of
The Numismatic Bibliomania Society.
For more information, please contact the editor.

N.B.S. Membership: \$15.00 annual dues in North America, \$20.00 elsewhere. Members receive all issues of the current volume. Requests for membership should be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer.

©2003 Numismatic Bibliomania Society

Are you trying to put together a set of *The Numismatist*?

Well, so am I. If you have some duplicates of single issues maybe we could trade. I have duplicates going back to 1911. So lets trade issues that we both need, for just the cost of postage. Write me with what you have to trade and what you need. If several people write I might be able to match everyone up with someone.

Jan Valentine
2966 Soscol Ave. #6
Napa, CA 94558

KARL MOULTON

Offers the largest selection of American numismatic literature for sale at fixed prices.

AUCTION CATALOGUES - REFERENCE BOOKS

PERIODICALS - PRICES REALIZED LISTS

Visit www.coincats.com or write for a printed list

PO Box 1073

Congress AZ 85332

928-427-3567 (evenings)

e-mail: numiscats@aol.com

www.HeritageCoin.com • www.CurrencyAuction.com

RARE
U.S. & WORLD COINS
& CURRENCY

AUCTION
BUY
SELL
TRADE
APPRAISE

Visit our website to view our
upcoming auction calendar:
Heritage Numismatic Auctions
Heritage World Coin Auctions
Currency Auctions of America-Heritage

*before you sell your coins or currency, you owe it to yourself to visit us or call.
Heritage will provide all the personal service you would expect from the world's*

largest numismatic dealer and auctioneer — and more!

1-800-US COINS (800-872-6467) • 24 hour hotline: Ext. 222



CAA HERITAGE
CURRENCY AUCTIONS OF AMERICA

 **HERITAGE**
NUMISMATIC AUCTIONS, INC.

HERITAGE
WORLD COIN AUCTIONS



Heritage Plaza 101 Highland Park Village, 2nd Floor • Dallas, Texas 75205-7119
1-800-US COINS (877-8967) • 214-628-3500 • FAX: 214-313-8438

www.HeritageCoin.com • e-mail: 8438@heritagecoin.com • www.CurrencyAuction.com • e-mail: 8438@CurrencyAuction.com



**AMERICA'S OLDEST NUMISMATIC
BOOK AND COIN DEALERS**

founded in 1932
first auction sale in 1935
at the same location since 1953

Stack's maintains a full stock of most standard numismatic references and can obtain most other titles as needed. We publish new works on coins as well as reprint others. We stock important out of print auction sale catalogues.

Stack's regularly publishes lists of the books we have in stock. If you have not already received one, please write for your free copy, mentioning you saw us here.

Our most recent publications include:

The Numismatic Legacy of the Jews. 2000. \$125

The George C. Perkins Collection. 2001. \$125

The Joseph Brobston Collection. (repr.) 1999. \$250

The Philip Showers Collection. (repr.) 1999. \$75

Stack's. A name you know and a name you can trust.



STACK'S RARE COINS

123 West 57th Street

New York, NY 10019

Tel. 212.582.2580

Fax 212.582.1946

Email to info@stacks.com

See us on the web at www.stacks.com

MINIMUM BID SALE

The following ten lots are offered without any premium to the highest bidder over the listed minimum bid plus shipping of \$2. The offer will close 20 days after receipt of this issue of **The Asylum**.

- 1) TAMS, *TAMS Journal*, Vol. 1 #1 thru Vol. V, #5, in 2 original TAMS 3-ring binders, 4to, VF (min. \$40)
- 2) Snowden, *Washington & National Medals*, 1861, 203 pgs. 4to, HB, 21 Plates, title pg. foxed, a bit worn. (min. \$30)
- 3) Kranister, Wm., *Money Makers International*, 1989, 324 pgs. 4to, HB, as new. (min. \$30)
- 4) Spink & Christies, *Byron Reed Collection*, Oct. 8, 1996, 572 lots, 251 pgs. 4to, Hardbound Edition, new (min. \$24)
- 5) Lepczyk, *George Sobin auction of French Ecus* March 7, 1977, 8vo, 211 pgs. 1336 lots. The only individual sale Hardbound as a special edition, new. (min. \$35)
- 6) Doty, Richard, *Money of the World*, 1978, 240 pgs. 4to, HB, new, hundreds of great photos with text. (min. \$25)
- 7) Davignon, *Contemporary Counterfeit Bust Halves*, 1996, 159 pages, 4to, Signed Special Edition limited to 40 HB signed copies, new. (min. \$18)
- 8) Garland, Paul, *History of Early Tennessee Banks and Their Issues*, 1983, 4to, HB, 256 pgs. as new. (min. \$18)
- 9) Fey & Oxman, *Top 100 Morgan Dollar Varieties —The VAM Keys*, 1997, This is the burgundy leather special edition with 22k gold embossing. Only 100 numbered copies, large, easy-to-read format 139 pgs. new. (min. \$40)
- 10) Superior Stamp & Coin, *ANA Auction Sale*, 1975, cc, with original PRL, 3583 lots, mint, in its original shipping box. (min. \$20)



The Money Tree Inc.
Myron Xenos
1260 Smith Court
Rocky River, OH 44116
PHONE: 440-33-3444
FAX: 440-333-4463
EMAIL: mdxenos@comcast.net

**FINE
NUMISMATIC
BOOKS
ANY LANGUAGE
ANY PERIOD
ALWAYS WANTED**



SPINK

founded 1666

69 SOUTHAMPTON ROW BLOOMSBURY,
LONDON WC1B 4ET. TEL: 020 7563 4000
FAX: 020 7563 4066 <http://www.spink-online.com>

Special Pre-Publication Offer!

CALIFORNIA PIONEER FRACTIONAL GOLD

"A monumental work has been made better." —Dave Harper • *Numismatic News*

Back in print again after 12 years, *California Pioneer Fractional Gold* by Walter Breen and Ronald J. Gillio has been revised by the leading experts in the field. The new, expanded second edition has more listings, more and sharper photos, and updated rarity ratings based on the most comprehensive information available. For the first time, proof of the actual circulation of small California gold as money in Gold Rush California is provided, based on the research of Dan Owens. The historical background of these issues has been greatly enlarged, with several new attributions to makers.

The revised edition, prepared by lead author Robert D. Leonard Jr., makes use of the Jay Roe collection and archives, the Auction Sales History compiled by California gold specialist Jack Tothoroh, and the assistance of many other collectors, researchers, librarians and museum curators. The bibliography has been doubled in size, sources are footnoted, and an index to the historical information included. Additionally, it has a foreword by Q. David Bowers and an introduction by Ronald J. Gillio.

This incredible second edition, completely updated, is now at the printers. At 264 pages, profusely illustrated predominantly with coins from the Jay Roe Collection, this volume is a must have for anyone interested in the Gold Rush, history, and California gold coinage, especially these fascinating small coins. We invite you to be one of the first to receive your copy at a 20% discount from the list price. We offer two editions:

- Softbound, list price \$34.50 • Hardbound, list price \$49.50

Pre-Publication Offer: Softbound: \$27.50 • Hardbound: \$39.50

To order, call Mary in our Publications Department at 800-222-5993.



Bowers and Merena Galleries

Box 1224 • Wolfeboro, NH 03894 • 1-800-222-5993 • In NH: 569-5095

Fax: (603) 569-5319 • e-mail: books@bowersandmerena.com

Buy Online, Bid Online, Books Online! www.bowersandmerena.com

COLLECTORS
UNIVERSE

ASYs03R

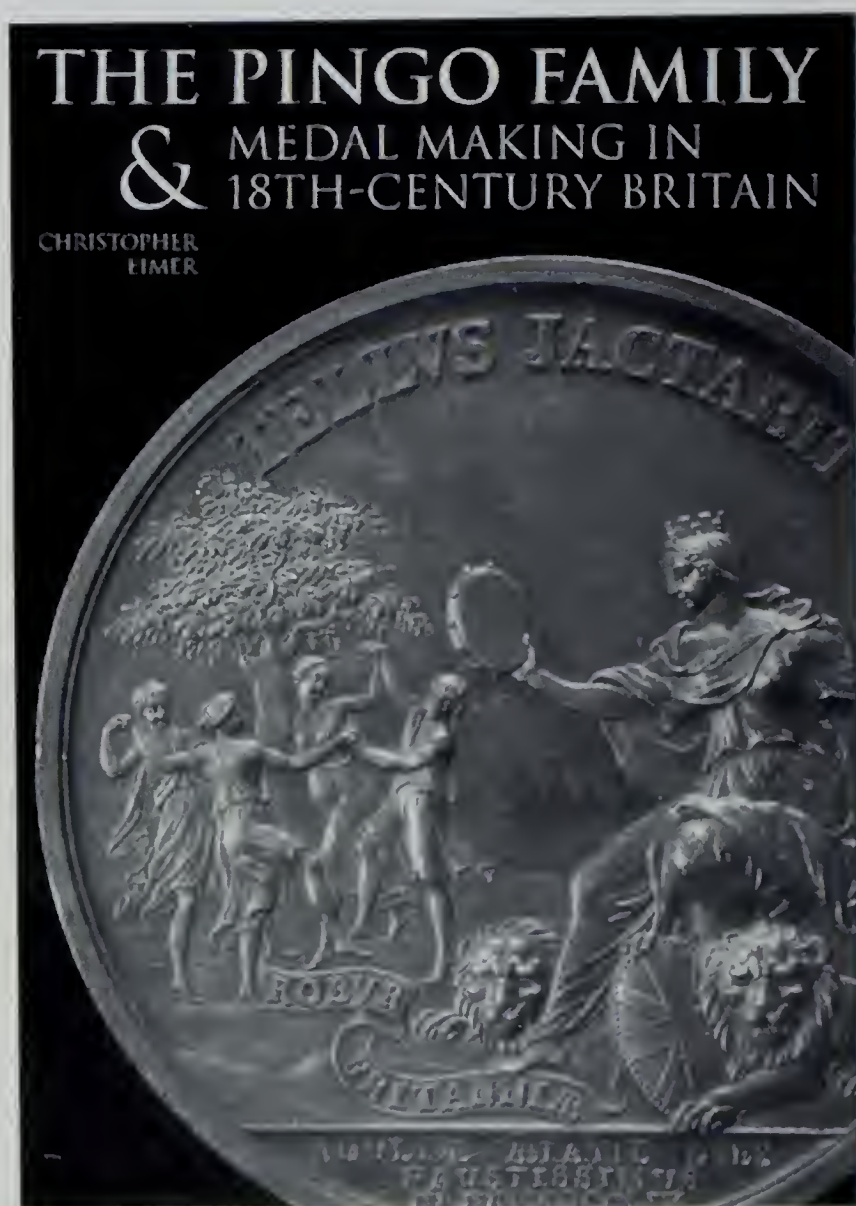


CHRISTOPHER EIMER

Since 1970, buying, selling and writing about Commemorative
and Historical Medals

(view online at www.christophereimer.co.uk)

The Pingo Family and Medal Making in 18th Century Britain
(Recipient of the 2002 Carl W.A. Carlsson Medal,
presented by Medal Collectors of America)



CHRISTOPHER EIMER

P.O. Box 352, London NW11 7RF

United Kingdom

Tel. (0044) 20 8458 9933 / Fax: (0044) 20 8455 3535

art@christophereimer.co.uk (e-mail)

www.christophereimer.co.uk (web-site)